

SPIRITUS

The Magazine
for University
of Detroit Mercy

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FALL 2024







UDM BY THE NUMBERS

#43

2025 *The Wall Street Journal*/College Pulse ranking
among U.S. institutions of higher learning.
(That's 9 places higher than last year.)

650

New first-year students.
(It's the biggest first-year class since
Detroit Mercy was established in 1990.)

5,587

Total enrollment across all
campuses for fall 2024.

\$25 MILLION

Record-setting fundraising this year.

For more about these and other
important numbers, visit udmercy.edu.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY,

I hope this message finds you in good spirits! It's always a pleasure to share the excitement that can be felt on all of our campuses.

This semester, our campus is alive with the enthusiasm of a new cohort of students — the largest first-year class since the 1990 consolidation of Mercy College of Detroit and University of Detroit Mercy. They're eager to learn and engage with each other and our community. Their energy and commitment to making a positive impact remind us of the vibrant spirit that defines this University.

We're also thrilled to announce that the University broke into the top 50 across the United States in the *The Wall Street Journal*/College Pulse rankings. Last year, UDM ranked No. 52 in the country. For 2025, we were ranked No. 43. These rankings, in addition to the diligent and committed work of our Enrollment Management, Marketing & Communications and Academic Affairs teams, among scores of other departments and offices, helped students from around the U.S. make UDM their college of choice.

Other fascinating news the past few months includes the creation of the Dental Oral Health Education Center in Vermont, which was announced near the end of September. You can read more about this new center on Page 7. This partnership helps expand the impact and reach of our School of Dentistry, provides the state of Vermont with highly educated oral health care practitioners and represents a new future for UDM.

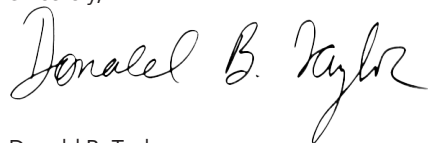
You'll also read about the innovative ways we are reaching out to faculty and staff and asking them for unique ideas on how we might move the University forward. Some of you may remember that I announced the Titan Innovation Fund at my inauguration in March 2023. This issue of *Spiritus* profiles unique projects that can only arise from the minds of people who love working at this institution. I think you'll be inspired when reading about the projects supported by this fund.

This issue also features stories on fundraising success, including one of the largest gifts ever made to the University through an estate gift from a recently passed alumnus.

Finally, please remember that our Office of Alumni Relations wants to tap your expertise to help our current students as they enter fields in which you may have experience. Former Titans helping future Titans, it's a great way to give back.

May you all have a blessed and merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Sincerely,



Donald B. Taylor
President



SPIRITUS

The Magazine for University of Detroit Mercy

PRESIDENT

Donald B. Taylor, Ph.D.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Dennis Carlesso '90, '97

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Gary J. Erwin

EDITOR

Ron Bernas

DESIGN

Gaby Rivas

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ron Bernas

Adam Bouton

Julie Erwin

P.J. Gradowski

Ricky Lindsay

PHOTOGRAPHY

Maxwell Alfieri

Hisham Almadani

Adam Bouton

Madeline Bryne

Jose Juarez

Ricky Lindsay

Mike Shuster

COVER PHOTO

Adam Bouton

BACK COVER PHOTO

Ricky Lindsay

The Marketing & Communications Department publishes **SPIRITUS** twice a year in conjunction with the Office of Alumni Relations. You may view an electronic version of the magazine at udmercy.edu/spiritus.

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DETROIT MERCY MISSION STATEMENT

University of Detroit Mercy, a Catholic University in the Jesuit and Mercy traditions, exists to provide excellent student-centered undergraduate and graduate education in an urban context. A Detroit Mercy education seeks to integrate the intellectual, spiritual, ethical and social development of students.

Visit Detroit Mercy on the web: udmercy.edu.

THIS IS **DETROIT MERCY**

University of Detroit Mercy is the sum of its stories. Here are a few.

Read more at udmercy.edu.



WALKING FOR A CAUSE

More than 600 people from across Michigan participated in the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk on Saturday, Sept. 21. This annual fund- and awareness-raising event was held on the McNichols Campus for the first time. There was a 5K walk, accompanied by music, inspiring speeches, food and fun all for a very serious cause.

THE STORY BEHIND HOW DETROIT MERCY-VERMONT CAME TO BE

BY RON BERNAS

In September, when Detroit Mercy announced a partnership with the state of Vermont to open a dental oral health education center, the move was applauded loudly in Detroit and New England.

When it opens in September 2027, University of Detroit Mercy-Vermont, as it will be known, will house modern classrooms with on-site clinics to support its clinical education program and serve as a public health Medicaid clinic to provide dental care to those who qualify. It will be the place where UDM students who studied on the Corktown Campus for two years will complete their final years of dental training.

The concept for this project has been in the making for a few years, according to Detroit Mercy Dental Dean Mert N. Aksu.



"We had noticed that in our pool of applicants, after we chose the class, there were 100 still on the waiting list," he said. "But we didn't necessarily want to increase the size of our classes."

With the help of Jon Ryder, associate dean for Academic Administration at the School of Dentistry, Aksu worked to find ways to provide opportunities for these highly qualified students. The two began looking at areas that had a lack of dental education facilities. This led them to Northern New England, which has only one dental school: the University of New England in Maine. From there, they looked at Vermont's demographics.

The Green Mountain State has almost 650,000 residents and only 300 dentists, many of whom are over 60 and nearing retirement. U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I) of Vermont discussed

what this means at a September press event announcing the new Dental campus.

"The suffering that the dental care crisis causes Vermonters and people across this country too often goes unseen and unaddressed," he said. "Far too many, especially in rural areas like Vermont, do not have access to a dentist, which forces them to either travel long distances or go without care they need. In some Vermont counties, there is a year-long waitlist. In others, there are no dentists at all who treat kids with Medicaid. And because we don't have a dental school in the state, there's no natural pipeline for dentists to train and eventually work in our communities. It is time for that to change.

"This historic initiative brings me a lot of hope for the care and education opportunities we can deliver to Vermont," he said.

One possible reason for that lack of pipeline, Aksu and Ryder found, is that many Vermont students do not return to Vermont if they attend a dental school out of state.

The idea behind all of this is that if students spend the last two years of their dental education in Vermont working with patients, some of them might stay, thus starting to address the dental healthcare crisis in the state.

"By partnering with University of Detroit Mercy, we are opening doors to educational opportunities that haven't existed before in Vermont, and increasing access to oral healthcare for Vermonters as well," said Justin Hurlburt, board president of the Vermont State Dental Society. "We are excited to partner with Detroit Mercy on this opportunity to expand the dentistry workforce in the state."

Sanders and fellow Sen. Peter Welch (D) are working to secure \$4.6 million in federal funding through the FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending process to support the initiative. The funding was approved by the Appropriations Committee and needs to be passed by the House and the Senate before being signed into law by President Joe Biden.

Detroit Mercy Dental is already recruiting for the first class of students who will work in the Dental Oral Health Education Center in Vermont. Students applying to Detroit Mercy Dental for the 2025-26 academic year will be asked to declare if they want to be part of the Vermont track. There is room for 28 students in the first class and that number will grow to 32 in succeeding years for a capacity of 64 students each year in Vermont.

"Students are interested," Aksu said, saying many applicants have expressed they are happy with taking their final two years in Detroit or Vermont. High-quality faculty are also lining up to apply.

"What we are stressing to applicants is that this is not a new program," Aksu said. "Students will receive the same courses in Vermont as they receive here. At the end of the day, it's a Detroit Mercy education."

PLANNED GIFT SUPPORTS UNIVERSITY'S FUTURE

BY RON BERNAS



LUCCI

In early 2023, Detroit Mercy was informed by the lawyer for the estate of Bernard Lucci '64 that the University was the recipient of a bequest from their client's will.

"We knew that the gift was coming," said Barbara Milbauer '66, of the Office of Planned Giving. "What we didn't know was how much it would be."

Estate gifts often take a lot of time to work their way through courts, attorneys and financial houses. When all was said and done, the gift amounted to more than \$5.9 million, the second-largest individual gift in the University's history.

Much like the donor of University's largest gift — from Arnold Jarboe '54, which was used to create a chair in the College of Business Administration in Jarboe's name — Lucci is someone who kept very much to himself.

"He was a very private person," said his cousin Robert Bettarel, who knew Lucci well. "He worked quietly and worked very hard and nobody really knew how wealthy he was."

Lucci had a rags-to-riches story that Bettarel is commemorating in a research project.

"He was a trailblazer to me, like an older brother," Bettarel said.

Born in Pennsylvania, Lucci and his parents moved to Detroit when he was very young. His father worked for Ford and his mother ran a restaurant. Shortly after they moved here, Lucci's father died.

"Both of our fathers had passed away when we were children, so it was just us and our mothers," Bettarel said.

Lucci attended Detroit Catholic Central on a scholarship arranged by an uncle. He worked a lot, with his mother, and at other odd jobs including as a Good Humor Man. His work as a caddy at Tam-O-Shanter Country Club in West Bloomfield — he got there by hitch-hiking — earned him an Evans Scholarship to University of Michigan where he received his undergraduate degree. The nationally sponsored Evans Scholarship Program for caddies received a major share of Lucci's estate. Later, Lucci earned an MBA in Industrial Management in 1964 from University of Detroit.

Then came a series of jobs at national and international technology and production companies that took him from Augusta, Ga., to Brazil to Pennsylvania, where he spent most of his adult life. He skied, danced and loved music, especially that of Italy, from where his family hails. Late in life, he took up investing and transitioned from chemical engineering to financial consultation. Lucci never married and had no children.



LUCCI'S GIFT HAS BEEN DESIGNATED FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING IN EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND THE ALLIED HEALTH FIELDS, THE TITAN INNOVATION FUND AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MCNICHOLS CAMPUS.

"He made the major portion of his fortune as an investor and investment consultant," Bettarel said. Notoriously sensible, Lucci did all his research at his local library in Norristown, Penn., which also received a portion of his estate; Villanova University was another beneficiary of Lucci's estate.

Detroit Mercy benefits greatly from gifts like Lucci's. In the last five years, the University has received more than \$22.7 million dollars from estate gifts.

"All estate gifts, regardless of size, are very important to us," Milbauer said. "While it's nice to receive a gift of this size, it's an exception. The estate gifts we receive range from \$1,000 and up. Some donors leave a specific amount to the University, but many donors, like Mr. Lucci, leave us a percentage of their estates. We welcome gifts of every size and are equally grateful for them all."

The process of creating a planned gift is easy, Milbauer said. There are many options, many of which have the benefit of reducing the tax burden after death. Gifts of cash, stocks, real estate, retirement plan assets among others can be made in any amount. They can be designated to particular colleges or schools, programs, scholarships, athletics or can be undesignated, which lets the University determine the best place to put the funds.

Lucci's gift has been designated for future programming in emerging technologies and the allied health fields, the Titan Innovation Fund (see Page 15) and improvements to the McNichols Campus.

"The best part about planned giving is that they are very future-focused," Milbauer said. "They allow the University to invest in the institution for the students of tomorrow. Donors won't see the results of their generosity, but they will know their gift will be put to good use."

To consider making an estate gift, visit udmercy.myplannedgift.org or call 313-993-1600.



STEVE AND KATHY MCSHANE, FLANKING TOMMY, ATTENDED THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MAKERSPACE & COLLABORATORY WHICH BEARS THEIR NAME.

REBUILT FOR TOMORROW

For years, the Annex — a good-sized building in the shadow of the Engineering building — has served as a storage space for the College of Engineering & Science's unused and outdated equipment. The College knew, though, it had to make better use of it.

On Nov. 14, the University officially opened the new space. The Steve & Kathy McShane Makerspace & Collaboratory has been designed as a workshop for students from different disciplines to work together and share ideas as they work on projects, competition teams and product refinement with an eye toward commercialization and entrepreneurship.

It's already doing that, CES Dean Katherine Snyder '89, '93 told the crowd who attended the grand opening, blessing and reception: In one area, an architecture class was meeting while in another, Engineering students were machining metal parts for a class project. "This is a place where ideas come to life," she said.

The space was named for the lead donors to the project Steve '66 and Kathy McShane, though funds came from several alumni and friends.

"Their dedication to our students and their future is inspiring," Snyder said.



GRANT WILL HELP BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY

In an effort to support industry-sponsored partnerships, University of Detroit Mercy's College of Engineering & Science was recently one of five institutions in a consortium awarded \$2 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The consortium includes UDM, Andrews University, Milwaukee School of Engineering, University of St. Thomas Engineering and Western New England University. Each school will receive \$400,000 over three years as part of the grant from NSF's Enabling Partnerships to Increase Innovation Capacity program.

"This grant will better enable Detroit Mercy faculty and students to engage with industry-sponsored projects," said Rick Hill, associate dean for Research and External Initiatives for UDM's College of Engineering & Science. "Working on such projects provides our students the kind of experiential learning that is core to a Detroit Mercy engineering education, while also benefiting our faculty by keeping their skills current and helping them gain a better understanding of the needs of our industrial partners which they can then bring back to the classroom."

The focus of the grant is on emerging technologies prevalent in engineering and computer science programs at UDM. They include artificial intelligence, physical cybersecurity, product innovation, and robotics and autonomy. Potential opportunities for other disciplines include pure sciences, health professions, business and computer information systems.

Hill said UDM will benefit from working with the other consortium members during the tenure of the grant, using each other's strengths and experiences to support one another.

The grant also serves as an opportunity to build new partnerships with those in the industry.

"Engineering at Detroit Mercy has a long history of industry engagement, an example of which is the cooperative internships required of our students," Hill said. "We plan to use this award to build on those relationships to expand the amount of industry-sponsored research conducted at the University."



IT'S A (HIGH-FIDELITY NEONATAL) MANNIKIN!

The College of Health Professions & McAuley School of Nursing welcomed Quinn, who joins a growing group of mannikins in the STAR Center. Students learn to treat people by testing, diagnosing, and treating these lifelike patients. Quinn was donated by sisters Sandy Noble and Nancy Noble Dodge, and was welcomed with a blessing and a party.

LAW CLINICS, STUDENTS CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

In the last year, three of Detroit Mercy Law's clinics celebrated notable successes for clients served through the program.

In June, the Conviction Integrity Clinic (CIC) — a partnership with Detroit Mercy Law and the Conviction Integrity Units in the Wayne and Oakland County prosecutors' offices — vacated the sentence and earned a new trial for a man sentenced to life in prison for first-degree murder.

Dorreon McBride applied to the clinic in 2020 for relief of his 2016 conviction. McBride was tried twice; the first jury was unable to decide on a verdict. In his second trial, a jailhouse informant testified that McBride had confessed to the murder, though he later recanted his testimony and indicated he had lied with the hopes of receiving a reduced sentence.

Cassandra DeMarco '24 began working on the case as a student in the CIC and became so invested in pursuing justice for McBride that she signed on for an additional directed study after her semester ended.

"As a student in the clinic, I was mainly reviewing files, which included police reports, witness statements and trial transcripts," DeMarco said. "After reviewing all important documents, we were tasked with writing a recommendation. I wrote the final recommendation that was presented to Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy."

A Wayne County judge agreed and vacated McBride's convictions and sentences.

"This is life-changing work, and to have the ability to participate in it as a student is a learning experience like no other," said Valerie Newman, who directs the Wayne County Conviction Integrity Unit.

"Clinic students like Cassandra provide an invaluable service to our community, while honing the skills that will serve them well as attorneys and advocates working for justice," added Interim Law Dean Nicholas Schroeck.

Also this year, the Immigration Law Clinic secured a grant of asylum status for an opposition activist from a West African country.

Simran Bhimani '24 and Hannah Lynn '24 worked on the asylum case under the supervision of Alex Vernon, director of the Immigration Law Clinic.

"This win has been the culmination of clinical student work over the past two years, starting when our client was detained upon arrival at Chicago O'Hare International Airport," Vernon said.

"I have learned that there is a lot more to each client's story than initially can meet the eye," added Lynn. "It is incredibly important to develop a strong relationship with your client based on trust and communication."



Finally, the Veterans Law Clinic (VLC) had its first fully honorable discharge upgrade granted for a U.S. Navy veteran. Holly Christian, director of the VLC, expanded the clinic's practice to include record corrections when she joined Detroit Mercy Law in 2021.

"This client had zero misconduct in his record, only accolades and recommendations for promotions and medals," Christian said. "When he received a career-ending back injury, he was told he would receive an honorable discharge, but was given a general discharge status instead."

"This status made him ineligible to receive his hard-earned military educational benefits. Our client now plans to go to college to study agriculture and use that degree for a career to support his young family."

The VLC was established in 2008 and has secured more than \$4.5 million in back benefits for veterans since it opened. In addition to record corrections, students represent veterans, families and survivors in obtaining pension, disability, compensation and related benefits.

Founded in 1965, Detroit Mercy Law's clinical program is among the oldest in the U.S. It has since expanded to operate 12 law clinics, where students gain valuable legal skills and experience while providing thousands of hours of client services each year.



ALLISON MOLLOY AND EMMA PEHOTE

FOUNDATION INSPIRES UDM STUDENTS WITH TRIP TO LOURDES

In May 2023, shortly before she graduated from Detroit Mercy with a Nursing degree, Allison Molloy '23 received a scholarship to go on a spiritual journey. She had no idea how much of an impact it would have on her.

The Our Lady of Lourdes Pilgrimage charitable fund is a scholarship set up through the Catholic Foundation of Michigan to honor Sr. Rose Mary Sam IHM and the 45 years of service she provided to Lourdes, France. It is used to send Detroit Mercy healthcare students to Lourdes with the Order of Malta, a lay religious order of the Catholic Church that dates back to the 1100s. The students would tend to malades — pilgrims seeking spiritual healing from the shrine.

Molloy and fellow nursing student Emma Pehote '23 received scholarships in 2023.

"I had no idea what I was in for," Pehote said. "No other student had gone before, so we didn't know what to expect."

The two traveled to Baltimore where they met up with the Order of Malta, nursing students from other Catholic universities from across the United States, and the pilgrims who were to journey with them.

"It was cool because we each had our own malade we were assigned to," Molloy said. "We would be there for them throughout the whole experience, including the flight. Our task

was to provide company, spiritual conversation or any other care they needed."

"We would go to Mass every day with our whole group," Molloy said. "There were also different events weaved through the trip such as Stations of the Cross, eucharistic adoration and processions. It was also not only the American chapter of the Order of Malta who were there, it was every country that had a chapter."

Molloy says she was moved by the experience.



"There are no words for how beautiful Lourdes is," she said. "I always have a hard time explaining it because that place has a spiritual feeling like no other. It was like I was drawn there."

The experience also changed how she viewed her future profession of nursing.

"Being with one person for a whole week helped me get to know my malade," Molloy said. "He was an older man who was wheelchair bound. I was able to help transport him and give him the company he wanted. It showed me how giving care to people who do not have much time left on Earth can be so impactful. I have carried that sentiment back with me and use it every day in my care as a nurse."

Molloy returned to Lourdes with her mother this past summer and with Joseph Francis '24, this year's Order of Malta scholarship recipient from Detroit Mercy.

"I just felt like I needed to go back," Molloy said. "I knew it was a place my mother would love. As soon as I got back, I told her that I had to go again with her. We were able to travel with Sr. Rose Mary Sam herself and see Lourdes from a different perspective. I will always cherish both experiences forever."



Scan the QR code to learn more and donate to the Our Lady of Lourdes Pilgrimage Charitable Fund.

WOMEN'S SOCCER GOALKEEPER FINDS HER OWN SILVER LINING

BY P.J. GRADOWSKI

Silver is a precious, shiny, white metal used as currency, in solar panels, tableware, jewelry and more.

But at Detroit Mercy, silver is found in the women's soccer net with goalkeeper Marisa Silver.

Nothing has been shiny for the graduate senior since she arrived at UDM, but she has stuck through it all — the pandemic, the pain of a lacerated kidney and two ACL injuries — to push the Titans near the top of the Horizon League standings this fall. With Silver's play in net, UDM made the Horizon League tournament for a second consecutive season.

"It has been tough," Silver said. "I might be missing a third of my kidney, and I have in the back of my head the thought of my knee buckling, but I never wanted to leave."

"She is pretty fearless, and she is going to give you all she can," added head coach Steve Shelton. "Anyone who has seen her play knows she is tough."

Silver's journey started during the pandemic, when the fall 2020 season was moved to spring 2021. She played well in her seven games, earning Horizon League All-Freshman honors, but nothing was normal in a season filled with cancelations and postponements.

As a sophomore in fall 2021, Silver started seven games, headlined by a career-high 11 saves at Northern Kentucky. But then came a collision at the net in a late September home game.

Silver left the game and went to the emergency room later that night. She stayed in the ER for a week to have surgery on her kidney. Just like that, her sophomore season was over.

"I got a lacerated kidney and had to have surgery to stop the bleeding," said Silver. "I now have coils on my kidney, and I only have two-thirds of it."

Silver rebounded from that injury to get back for spring practice. But just 13 minutes into the 2022 season, Silver came out of the net to play a ball, and tore her ACL after an opposing player went right into her leg. Another season was over.

"The kidney was one thing — that was a freak injury — but I had never had an athletic injury like that before," said Silver. "I didn't even know it was my ACL. My whole leg hurt."

"I thought we would be a really good team and I was ready to step up and play my best, and then it is over again."

The knee injury required surgery and rehab, but Silver could not regain full stability for the 2023 season — her senior year. She saw action in just one game, totaling seven minutes.

"I kept tweaking it throughout the season," said Silver. "It was



really frustrating. I wanted to play, I felt like I could play, but my knee kept buckling."

In four years, Silver went from an All-Freshman goalie to one of the biggest cheerleaders on the women's soccer team. In her senior season, UDM clinched a playoff spot for the first time since 2018.

"It was fun cheering for my team and making the playoffs, but just frustrating because I wanted to contribute more," said Silver.

After the season, Silver was on her way back to being the Titans' top goalie. She rehabbed and practiced in the spring until her knee buckled again.

Silver thought her collegiate career was over.

"I got an MRI and it said it was torn," Silver said. "I couldn't see the doctor until a week later, and that week, I told the team and coach that I was not coming back."

But everything changed for Silver during her doctor appointment.

"He did all his tests and told me it was only partially torn, that I still have a lot of function and if I rehabbed hard again, I could build up the strength and play," Silver said. "I had one more year of school left, and since I was returning as a student, I decided I would give it another shot to come back and play."

Coming off a playoff appearance, Silver's spot wasn't guaranteed. She had played only 16 games in four years and just two appearances over the last two seasons.



IN BRIEF

Former Titan Bul Kuol joined an elite list of former Titans who have become Olympians when he competed on the inaugural South Sudan men's basketball national team at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

The 6-foot-7 guard who hails from Australia, averaged 15.6 points a game in his one season at Calihan. In exhibition play prior to the Olympics, South Sudan made news by nearly beating the United States' men's team that was packed with NBA MVP winners. South Sudan did not advance out of group play.

"Coach was very honest and upfront with me and said they were looking at bringing in another veteran goalie," said Silver. "He said, 'with all the injuries, we need another goalie here.' I understood his position and took it as just another challenge.

"Sometimes you have to be the bad guy as the head coach, but this is Division I soccer and having two good goalkeepers is great for us and them," added Shelton. "There was a lot of competition, and at the end of the day, it only made our program better."

When this season started, Silver was splitting time with senior transfer Chantelle Symes. Both goalkeepers looked to secure the top spot for Horizon League play.

It was Silver who earned the start in the Titans' first conference game against Youngstown State and made three saves in a victory. A few days later, she had four stops in a win over Robert Morris as UDM started 2-0 in the Horizon League.

A week later, Silver made five saves as the Titans tied at Green Bay for their first league point on the road since the 2021 season. She helped the Titans earn their first points since 2007 against preseason favorite and perennial power Milwaukee, collecting four saves in a draw.



In the season finale against rival Oakland, Silver recorded six saves to lead the Titans to the No. 3 seed in the Horizon League tournament.

"I think she is one of the best goalkeepers in the Horizon League," Shelton said. "She can bail you out if the defense breaks down and keep you in games when needed."

Through 17 games (16 starts), Silver has 67 saves. Her 125 career stops rank 10th in program history.

It's quite an accomplishment for someone who thought her college playing career was over.

Thanks to Silver in net, the Titans have shined this fall, winning their first playoff game in six years.

"It is hard to imagine everything that has happened during my time here," Silver said. "I would have loved to play every game during my time here. I feel that I could have helped the program, but in the end, everything has taught me to appreciate everything and every day."



TITANS *of* INNOVATION

University invests in the future

BY RICKY LINDSAY

During the first few months of his presidency, Donald B. Taylor met with employees to hear their thoughts on how to move University of Detroit Mercy forward. A common theme emerged from these listening sessions: Employees had exciting ideas, but they had gone unvoiced due to concerns over funding or resources.

The Titan Innovation Fund was introduced at Taylor's inauguration in March 2023 to help change that and spark innovation at UDM.

It is designed to support new, creative ideas that improve the University and student experiences by ensuring that they receive the resources and support needed to survive.

"Thanks to generous donors, we are launching this fund to provide grants that empower faculty, staff and students to try new things," Taylor said at his inauguration. "Such funds have proven to be a successful catalyst of innovation and change at campuses around the country."

Early ideas impacted by the Titan Innovation Fund

include a mobile coffee cart operated by Business Administration students, a science communication art show, a program that helps mentor first-year Titans and the birth of a center that focuses on using artificial intelligence to address community healthcare challenges.

"You create a program like this because you want to spark innovation, you want to spark creativity," said Karen Lee, associate vice president of Academic Administration. "And oftentimes, when you're stuck in your role, whether it's a faculty, staff or administrative role, you don't get to do things that are outside the box."

The process

At the heart of the Titan Innovation Fund is seed money, which is awarded to help ideas blossom into real, tangible projects.

The process began with a call for proposals at the start of the 2023-24 academic year.

Pre-proposals identified a problem or opportunity at UDM, along with an innovative approach to

“It’s infectious. People get inspired to do things that they normally wouldn’t do. ... I love seeing that spark in someone’s eyes where the world is the limit.”

– Karen Lee

addressing it. A review team and Taylor evaluated the submissions and selected several they felt deserved a full proposal, which included details like budgets, logistics and measures of success and sustainability.

All proposals were required to align with institutional priorities outlined by Taylor, which include expanding student experiences, fostering a sense of belonging, raising UDM’s profile and strengthening community partnerships and engagement.

Twenty-five pre-proposals were submitted during the first year of the Titan Innovation Fund, with 18 full proposals receiving funding.

Taylor experienced firsthand what can come out of this type of program at other institutions. As did Lee, who facilitates the Titan Innovation Fund.

"When the president said he wanted to do it here, I was all in, because I know what happens with it," Lee said. "It's infectious. People get inspired to do things that they normally wouldn't do. It really makes a difference when you have that support and a little extra money."

"I love seeing that spark in someone's eyes where the world is the limit."

Guiding new Titans through freshman year

Some of the projects supported by Titan Innovation Fund are just starting.

One of those is the Titan Mentor Program, established to improve the student experience by supporting first-year students identified as at-risk as they navigate their first year at UDM.

It consists of 50 mentees (freshmen), 10 mentors (sophomores and above) who are student leaders at UDM, a graduate assistant who operates the program and four leads (faculty and staff) who meet with and support mentors.

Sandra Alef, director of Residence Life, has seen mentor programs thrive at other institutions and thought it fit the Titan Innovation Fund's parameters well.

"The research is out there, and it shows that mentors are so very important to a student's persistence at a university," Alef said. "Students are going to listen to their peers far more often than they're going to listen to us. That's why I think it's so important that they have somebody to talk to, listen to and to just have as a touch point."

It's too early for any solid data, but Alef is already seeing dividends from its peer-to-peer engagement.

The Titan Mentor Program kicked off with an icebreaker event over the summer that was only scheduled for 30 minutes, but "people stuck around for an hour, hour and a half, because they were just craving that one-on-one conversation," Alef said.

The idea to implement a mentor program wasn't new, but Alef said the Titan Innovation Fund kickstarted it. The seed money funds a graduate assistant who plays a big role in the program's success, as well as book scholarships for mentors.

"Without the funding from the Titan Innovation Fund, I think this would've been like a 3-5 plus-year project as opposed to a full rollout that we were able to accomplish this fall," Alef said.

Alef's dream is that every first-year student is offered a mentor because they are new at UDM. She already sees ways for the Titan Mentor Program to grow and improve after its launch, but it will require additional funding.

"We'll have to figure out how to fund it for years to come, because the students that are participating in the program, we're seeing good things from. Those who are involved, I think, are going to get a great deal out of it."

"If we save five students from transferring, withdrawing or canceling, it's absolutely worth it."

An impact through expression

Other projects have already started and found ways to continue.

Maris Polanco thought about bringing science

communication (SciComm) art to UDM months before the Titan Innovation Fund was established.

"At first, I was trying to figure out how to do it all with no funding," said Polanco, a lab manager and adjunct professor in the Biology department. "But having the Titan Innovation Fund made it way more legitimate."

SciComm art is an interdisciplinary form of expression that incorporates STEM topics, art and educational content.

With the Titan Innovation Fund's support, UDM hosted its first SciComm art exhibit, "CNXNS" (pronounced "connections"), in February 2024. It featured pieces produced by students, faculty and staff.

The seed money allowed Polanco to pay artists and workers for their labor and provide food during the exhibit's opening event.

"It's basically all being reinvested directly into the people involved, and that's something that's really high on my priority list," Polanco said.

Additional funding — a \$12,000 grant from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, matched by Polanco's remaining Titan Innovation Fund award — led to a second art exhibit. Titled "UNREAL," it will be held in February 2025 and will focus on themes of futurism, science fiction and more.

Polanco believes that having an art show at UDM is important because it creates community by providing creative opportunities.

"It's showing that we value creative thinking here at Detroit Mercy," she said.

Harnessing AI through innovation

Other projects supported by the Titan Innovation Fund are quite extensive and have ambitious goals.

Phillip Olla, associate professor of Health Services Administration, proposed the creation of the Center for Augmenting Intelligence in Urban Health (CAIUH). Its purpose is to use artificial intelligence to address community healthcare challenges.

"I wanted to create a culture of innovation within UDM," Olla said. "What we do is very innovative, and the students and staff have phenomenal vision, but we don't really have a mechanism to take what we have and put it out there."

Enter CAIUH, which Olla calls a "hub of excellence and innovation." Its work can be categorized into three sections: aeroponics and hydroponics, a breath lab and AI for education.

Through hydroponics (using water-based nutrient solution rather than soil) and aeroponics (using mist or fog to deliver nutrients to roots), CAIUH is trying to train Detroiters how to grow food that they can sell.



CIRCLING THE SUN (2024) ZAHRA KANJI.



EVOLVING TENDRILS (2023) BY GREG GRABOWSKI



The breath lab is attempting to identify what healthy breath looks like, which could aid in early diagnosis of diseases. It starts by capturing the breath of UDM student-athletes and later examining that data through a partnership with Amazon Web Services.



PHILLIP OLLA

"A lot of the big breath research institutes, they're doing great discoveries — cancer biomarkers, TB biomarkers, COVID biomarkers — but no one's really looked at what a normal breath is supposed to look like," Olla said.

AI has been an increasingly popular technology and

CAIUH hopes to teach people how to use it. There are two aspects to this project. The first is teaching students how to use it ethically to give them an edge in the workforce, and the second is creating learning modules that community members can take to teach them how to use AI in their everyday lives.

Olla has already experienced the impact from the Titan Innovation Fund's support.

"The money we have from the Titan Innovation Fund is seed funding, which means it's just to get things going," Olla said. It's allowed CAIUH to get resources, such as specialized equipment to grow plants using hydroponics and aeroponics.

"It's really helped, because without that, there's no way we would be able to even start demonstrating what we're doing," Olla said. "It's a catalyst. Without it, we might be able to do 1-2 projects on the side. But it would never give us the collection of innovation that we have now."

Olla started CAIUH to help bring innovation to Detroit and UDM, but believes it allows employees, students and others to live the University's Jesuit and Mercy mission.

"It's really important for us to live our mission. We can't just say it and teach it without doing it," he said. "This allows us to do our mission. On top of that, the health outcomes that we could achieve if we stay the course of time on this are significant."



PROFESSOR, TENN INNOVATE TO MAKE SCIENCE FUN FOR DETROIT CHILDREN

Eva Nyutu has spent her entire career teaching college students. But making science fun and engaging for children in Detroit became her focus this past summer.

Nyutu, an assistant professor of Biology at University of Detroit Mercy, introduced scientific concepts to children by growing plants over the course of several weeks. Various plants were grown using hydroponics, a technique that uses a water-based nutrient solution rather than soil.

The work with children was a result of a collaboration on hydroponics between UDM's Titan Equity Nourishment Network (TENN) and Brilliant Detroit, a nonprofit that focuses on helping children become school ready.

The goal of this collaboration was to bring science to the neighborhood surrounding UDM's McNichols Campus and increase children's interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

"I think it's very important for these students, because this hydroponic project is something that we're able to bring for them in their classroom and it's allowing them to affirm themselves as scientists," Nyutu said.

Over the course of several weeks, she taught children from kindergarten to fourth grade all about plants during summer camp programming at Brilliant Detroit's Martin Park location.

Children learned about the life cycle and different parts of plants and their importance in the ecosystem, all while growing their own using a hydroponics system. Occasionally, Nyutu was joined at Brilliant Detroit by her research students, Kyla Charlebois and Shirli Qushku, and Assistant Professor of Biology Nicole Najor.

"In a way, it's helping them to develop skills that they'll continue using as they continue on with elementary, middle and high school," Nyutu said. "They might be having fun, but they're still developing these skills, unknowingly or knowingly."

Nyutu witnessed children learning firsthand when nutrients were added to the hydroponics system.

"We have to put nutrients into the hydroponics because it's only using water to grow," she said. "So, they tell me, 'I see the nutrient – when it was blue, it turned green.' That's an observation they're making."

Using hydroponics to educate children was an idea sparked by TENN's previous experience with the method.

TENN had been working with UDM's Center for Augmenting Intelligence in Urban Healthcare on a hydroponics project focused on solving problems with food access. That led TENN — an Institute for Leadership and Service program that fosters student and community collaboration for a more food-sovereign Detroit — to think of other ways hydroponics could impact people.

"We got these systems, and then with the Ford Community Corps Partnership grant, thought it would be a wonderful learning tool for students," said Chelsea Manning, TENN's program manager. "This idea just came as a way to get Brilliant Detroit their own systems so that they could keep using it and as a tool for learning."

With the way TENN works closely with groups surrounding UDM's McNichols Campus, Manning said the program has become a "community facilitator" for proposing new ideas and projects that connect individuals and groups.

"We're always trying to find ways to connect the resources we have on campus with the people we work with," she said. "Obviously, we do great things with food, but there's so many other things on campus that these groups can benefit from."

"Having that relationship already with Brilliant Detroit, we were able to help connect the people."

While this initial hydroponic project with Brilliant Detroit spanned several weeks in the summer, Nyutu and Manning are working to continue it next summer.

If it can continue, "then I think it's incredibly important to get our students on campus into the community," Manning said. "Not only because they can share their gifts, but there's so much learning that the students get when they go work with these kids."

"I think it's just the best way for our community to support and learn from each other."

For Nyutu, being able to introduce children to scientific concepts was a rewarding experience.

"Just impacting one or more children to understand science, to learn science, to think of themselves as a scientist, that makes my day very happy and fulfilling," she said.

VALEDICTORIAN STARS AS HOST OF DETROIT PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

BY ADAM BOUTON



Kara Wolfbauer '23 found her calling behind the microphone as a student at University of Detroit Mercy.

It didn't go unnoticed.

Wolfbauer, who gained valuable experience as a host in Calihan Hall and at the USPBL baseball league in Utica, is now showcasing her voice, talent and enthusiasm in some of Detroit's biggest professional sports venues.

The Class of 2023 Valedictorian is already in her second year as an in-arena host at Little Caesars Arena for Detroit Red Wings games and recently wrapped up a season as the in-park host at Comerica Park for the Detroit Tigers.

There are times when the St. Clair Shores native and former softball student-athlete still has to pinch herself.

"Getting to work for my hometown teams has been surreal," Wolfbauer said.

Already, Wolfbauer has been in the middle of playoff runs and packed venues as part of the gameday experience. Like she did at Calihan Hall during Titan basketball games, Wolfbauer engages with fans of all ages, on the massive videoboard.

She was part of the LCA atmosphere when the Red Wings won in overtime during a drive to the 2024 playoffs that ultimately ended short, and interviewed Tigers players from the field after they clinched a postseason spot at Comerica Park in late September.

"It was so special to see the crowd and the city of Detroit so excited, and to know that I got to play a small part in it," she said.

The journey has also been bittersweet for Wolfbauer, who lost her biggest supporter and best friend in her mom after a battle with cancer during the Tigers' magical season.

"She's the reason I had the courage to go into this industry," she reflected. "After the Tigers clinched, all I wanted to do was call my mom. It was so weird: It was heartbreaking, yet so eye-opening and amazing."

"Moments like that made me realize how special it was to have shared 23 years of moments like that with my mom. Honestly, another blessing of working in the field is that it helps me still feel close to her. She was so proud when I got the job, and I know she's proud and with me every time I get to do something so special."



It was her mom who helped convince her to attend Accepted Students Day at Detroit Mercy as a high school senior. Shortly after arriving at the Briggs Building and touring the Communication Studies department where she would later thrive, Wolfbauer and her mom knew it was home.

"My mom just kept looking at me and said, 'I love this.'"

That feeling of being at home continued as a student on the McNichols Campus, as many at Detroit Mercy guided her in the right direction that ultimately led to a microphone in her hand, internships and the opportunity to gain the confidence being on camera.

From the Athletic Department to the College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences, to the Center for Career & Professional Development and beyond, they were all instrumental in forging the connections that would help define her career path.

"I was fortunate enough to get so much experience at such a young age," she said. "I really mean it when I say that thanks to smaller class sizes at Detroit Mercy, I had more opportunities to get that hands-on experience. Getting to immerse myself in it was the best way to learn."

Now that she's in the professional sports industry, Wolfbauer is enjoying the current path and trying to not get too far ahead of herself.

"I try and stay grounded each day and work one step better toward the job I'm at right now," she said. "I don't want to look



too far ahead and miss what's right in front of me. I truly believe as long as I keep taking one step forward at getting better each day, I'll find the right path."

Wolfbauer is thankful that she chose Detroit Mercy for many reasons, but maybe most importantly is because of how much the institution and the people in it care.

"The Detroit Mercy community was such a big aspect of my life for those four years of college, but the most amazing thing is they still continue to support me even now that I'm graduated," Wolfbauer said. "Professors, deans, co-workers, friends, President Taylor and his wife Lechia all still reach out to me and check in. Several of them even showed up to my mother's funeral."

"That's the Detroit Mercy difference, if you ask me. They're here for me for life, and I'll always be here for Detroit Mercy, too."

DETROIT

INNOVATION



JAKE DWYER
META SIGN ARTS
313-686-7051
CITY WALLS '19

MAKING DETROIT MORE VIBRANT

ONE WALL AT A TIME

BY JULIE ERWIN

Detroit is targeting blight in its neighborhoods with the powerful connection between art and community.

"Community art is all about ownership and connection," Bethany Howard '21 said. "It's about bringing people together to create something special, something that reflects their shared values and experiences."

That was the inspiration behind the City Walls program, which the City of Detroit launched in 2017 and which Howard runs. Through this program, Detroit artists work to remove blight by creating murals throughout the city. At first, the program sought to replace graffiti-covered walls and viaducts with murals through an artist residency program called the Blight Abatement Artist Residency Program.

Now in its seventh year, City Walls has grown into much more, having turned almost 300 walls across the Motor City into works of art.

"Our mission is to create vibrant public art that authentically represents the values and aspirations of the communities we serve," Howard said.

Not only does the City Walls program build on Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan's Blight to Beauty campaign, it acts as an agent that brings communities together.

From curating a diverse stable of local artists, whose styles and perspectives align with those of City Walls, to engaging with the community to ensure the art reflects their values and aspirations, Howard is an integral cog in the engine driving the Motor City's transformation. She keeps the wheels turning by collaborating with other city departments and organizations to provide support while connecting with residents and stakeholders.

"The public often sees the stunning murals adorning city walls, but there's a significant amount of work that goes into each project," she said.

The process is intricate, and Howard has her hand in it from start to finish.

Once a project is identified and stakeholders, community members and nonprofits have collaborated to devise a vision statement for the project, Howard puts out a call for artists to submit a proposal, which could contain a rendering or preliminary sketch based on the stakeholders' vision statement. From there, a selection panel, which can consist of Detroit

City Walls by Jake Dwyer
8125 Mack Ave, Detroit, MI 48214



Bethany Howard.

community members, stakeholders and arts professionals, votes on the submissions. This process narrows down the artists' proposals. The next step is to score the proposals.

"The rubric could be based on a plethora of things, such as if the artist is from Detroit, submitted a preliminary sketch, understood what the vision statement was and/or has experience painting on outside durable spaces. The rubric varies on a project-by-project basis," said Howard. "The scores determine the number of winners based on the number of walls we have per project. If we have three positions for a wall, the three artists with the highest scores are awarded the project."

The artists chosen for the project are given a healthy stipend for their participation in the project as well as a budget for supplies.

It's often Howard, with boots on the ground, who identifies spaces suitable for a mural. Typically, building owners will approach City Walls about the prospect of painting on their wall and it's added to the list, but Howard said she's "caught a lot of fish" when she comes across a blank wall in her daily pursuits that falls in line with a project

and approaches the building owner herself.

This work is rewarding and something Howard has gravitated toward most of her life.

Howard, who holds a Master of Community Development degree from Detroit Mercy, said her journey began while she was serving as a facilitator at the nonprofit family counseling agency Black Family Development.

"This role introduced me to the vibrant world of community connections, where I collaborated with families, schools, churches and sports teams to support the growth of children. I absolutely loved seeing how evidence-based practices made a real difference."

She transitioned from that role to later join the Eastside Community Network, a nonprofit in the Detroit neighborhood where she grew up.

"It felt like a full-circle moment — my childhood was already rich with community development, even before I knew what to call it," Howard said.

"It's truly a passion and purpose for me, especially in my current position," she said.



Immigrant Arrival by Pat Perry
2498 Vernor Highway, Detroit, MI 48216



The Spirit by Waleed Johnson
7930 Mack Ave, Detroit, MI 48214

The MCD program at Detroit Mercy was a natural progression for the ReBUILDDetroit scholar in her academic pursuits.

"UDM's unique blend of academic rigor and community engagement perfectly prepared me for my role at City Walls and any other role that I will have in the future," she said.

Through this journey, Howard has developed a passion for public art and a desire to celebrate the creativity of Detroiters. Her key commitment at City Walls is to foster local talent and create meaningful community experiences.

"My deep-rooted connection to Detroit is a part of my passion for my work at City Walls where I'm fortunate to collaborate with talented colleagues across various departments to ensure that our projects resonate with local residents," she explained.

Building on the framework of the City Walls murals project was the DCLEATED initiative in which City Walls, Detroit Medical Center, Spacelab Detroit and Visit Detroit collaborated to celebrate the 2024 NFL Draft in Detroit. In this project, 20 giant football cleats were fabricated and then painted by local artists to raise awareness for important Detroit-specific causes. The cleats were displayed throughout the city during the draft and the venture raised more than \$85,000 to benefit the charities selected by City Walls and the artists.

"Connecting with the artists and meeting the passionate leaders behind these causes is an experience that'll inform our community engagement going forward," Howard said.

Another project spearheaded by Howard is a residency project called Detroit Artist Apprentice Program (DAAP) and it provides local artists with studio space and resources to develop new work. It also connects experienced artists with emerging talent to foster growth and collaboration within Detroit's artistic community. Upon completion of the residency program, the mentees will then create three murals within certain city

workspaces. Inspired by Aristotle's "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," the philosophy of DAAP is the greatest potential is achieved through connection.

"Just like the components of a car, our collective power ignites when we work together," said Howard.

The energy in Detroit and responsiveness to these projects by the artists and the community is palpable.

"The reactions to completed murals will forever make me smile, from the audible gasps of awe to the palpable energy that fills the space," Howard said. She is eager to introduce Detroit's residents to a wider range of artistic expressions, perhaps including more abstract works.

"And let's not forget the practical side of things," she added. "Murals are magnets for people. Residents and visitors alike are drawn to their colors and stories. This can boost local economies, revitalize neighborhoods and create a more vibrant and welcoming city."

The City Walls team is engaging with the Department of Neighborhoods on the Neighborhood Signs Project in which 60 registered neighborhoods across Detroit will receive unique welcome signs to highlight their communities.

Also in the works is a partnership with a group called BuildSubmarines on a "We Build Giants" mural project, where a local artist will be commissioned through the open call process to design a mural that spotlights Michigan's skilled trade workers and salutes Michigan's manufacturing workforce.

Through her work, Howard brings people together to create something special that captures the spirit of a vibrant Detroit and puts it on display. In her view, these pieces "will challenge our perspectives, spark conversations and enrich the landscape in Detroit for years to come."

COMING HOME!

Another Homecoming is in the memory books. Despite a dreary day, spirits were high as hundreds of alumni, students and friends came together to celebrate Detroit Mercy. Some came for the bonfire and hanging out with friends, and others came to learn, at the first College of Health Professions Research Symposium. Others came to renew their vows at Mass or attend the National Pan-Hellenic Council Yard Show. Whatever it was that drew them back to the McNichols Campus, a good time was had by all.





DOROTHY WALKER '74, '87 AND SISTER CONSTANCE FERGUSON '74 RECEIVE A 50-YEAR GRADUATION PIN FROM UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT DONALD B. TAYLOR DURING HOMECOMING IN SEPTEMBER.

SISTERS IN THEIR 90s RETURN FOR 50TH

Each year at Homecoming, the University celebrates alumni with a dinner on the occasion of their 50th class reunion.

This year's honorees included two sisters, both in their 90s, who graduated in 1974.

Dorothy Walker, 93, and Constance Ferguson, 92, were working as teacher's aides at Lincoln Elementary when their principal told them about a University of Detroit program that offered free tuition to residents of the Brewster-Douglass Project on Detroit's east side.

Neither of them had entertained the idea of college, but the possibility of free tuition was too tempting to pass up. They entered college together in the fall of 1970.

"We always did things together," Walker said.

But it wasn't easy for the two women who were in their late 30s.

"We helped each other, worked together, pulled all-nighters," Ferguson said. "We were working and raising children — my sister had

nine and I had three — but we were together in this trying to get it right. My sister had an ease about her that helped."

Both women graduated together in 1974 and their inspirational accomplishment was the subject of a story in the *Detroit Free Press*.

Walker and Ferguson went on to earn master's degrees and have long careers as teachers in the Detroit Public Schools. Ferguson is still teaching, helping with Sunday School classes every week at her church.

To this day, the sisters believe participating in that program changed the course of their lives.

"I felt that going to school was an opening toward helping others," Ferguson said. "To this very day, I thank God every day for this."



SHARING THEIR SPIRIT

This year's class of Alumni Spirit Award honorees share a little of what they learned over their long, impressive careers. These excerpts are from their acceptance speeches at the award ceremony on Sept. 26. Their quotes are left to right in order of the photograph. At far right is Detroit Mercy President Donald B. Taylor.

"In terms of what I learned at U of D and how it affected me in my life is probably not what you'd think from a chemical engineer. You'd probably think it was about the formulas and equations and the math that went into all of that, but it wasn't. It was about how to solve problems...by bringing together lots of information."

LARRY WASHINGTON '68, '69, Retired Corporate Vice President, Dow Chemical, College of Engineering & Science

"My parents always said 'treat everyone equally and always give back to the community you live in.' I soon realized the mission and the vision of the University was very similar to my parents' vision. I fell in love with this University, literally, the first week I was here."

STEVEN VOGEL '70, '75, Founder, Schervish, Vogel, Merz, PLC, School of Architecture & Community Design

"What I learned most through my career is that relationships matter, and that the relationships you build with your team, your family and those you care for truly carry you through life. I am eternally grateful for this University and how it set me up to be successful to represent the University and Nursing."

RENAY L. GAGLEARD '88, '90, '09, '10, '15, Associate Chief Nurse, Trinity Health, College of Health Professions

"I came back to University of Detroit Mercy because there is something more I wanted to give — to be able to bring people together, to bring the histories together, that if we are going to contribute to the community, we have to know our history."

HONORABLE TERRANCE A. KEITH '84, Judge, Wayne County Probate Court, School of Law

"It was because of the incomparable education I received here that I was able to realize a gratifying general practice for 40 years and in addition, experience life-altering international volunteer missions to the Philippines and Brazil."

WILLIAM CHASE D.D.S. '72, Retired Dentist, School of Dentistry

"My years at Detroit Mercy went by in somewhat of a blur. I was busy adjusting to a new country, new people and new subject matter. And what was a constant to me was that it was a Jesuit institution."

INA G. FERNANDEZ '74, President & CEO, Fern Capital, Inc., College of Business Administration

The honoree from the College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences was unable to attend; she will be honored in 2025.

IN MEMORIAM

WE REMEMBER ALUMNI AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE PASSED ON TO ETERNAL LIFE

1950s

Nadim S. Ajlouny '57, '66
Charles T. Batcheller '59
Lawrence A. Bielman Jr. '55
The Hon. Harold M. Bulgarelli '57
Thomas R. Carey '57
Thomas R. Conway '59
Neil R. Drouillard '51
Frank C. Druzynski '52
Carolyn E. Eady '57
Carl E. Fletcher '51
Yvonne Gonda '56
John B. Knoerl '59
Stanley J. Konieczny '58
Jeanne (Antieau) King '51
Richard A. Labas '57
Therese (Bosco) Larkin '50
Charles E. Lotzar, Jr. '54
M. Gail (Bowler) Macks '58
Maj. Gerald J. Marenich '55
Mary (Espinosa) Martin '55
Robert J. Michielutti '51
Francis J. Murphy, Jr. '58
Robert J. Nicaise '56
Janet L. Oswald '59
Elizabeth F. Payne '57
Elizabeth (Tkach) Pesta '56
Dr. Angelo B. Pugliesi '53
Marie F. Romanski '54
Charles R. Rutherford '53
Dennis W. Shea '51
M. Rosita Schiller, R.S.M. '59
John C. Smith '50
Mary Jean (Koblinski) Tatrow '53
Victor J. Thoas, D.D.S. '54
Geraldine (Van Hollebeke) '56

1960s

John J. Baldwin '62
Richard E. Bartley '65
James E. Bates '69
Frank J. Brasile '64
Paul F. Brecht, D.D.S. '66
Leo P. Brennan '65
Ronald J. Bruniger '63
William C. Charron '64
John F. Connell '65
Joyce Coohy, R.S.M. '62
Brother Phillip G. Couture '66
Catherine M. Cummings, R.S.M. '61
Jon P. Dady '64

Eric L. Dlugokinski '65, '67
Gabrielle M. Downs '60
William F. Farnan '69
James R. Filak '67
John F. Gies '67
Kerry M. Gigot '69
John M. Haas '64
Arnold R. Hagen '64
Michael J. Heffernan '64
Joan (Femegen) Iwasko '61
Edward F. Kelly '63
Richard J. Knuff '66
John L. Kroha '66
Judith (O'Halloran) LaFata '62, '63
Adrian M. Lewandowski '67
William C. Longhurst '65
James A. Mellenger '61
Thomas H. Mellenger '61
Edward E. Nawotka Jr., D.D.S. '66
Daniel J. O'Brien '61
J. Patrick O'Leary '64
Robert Ouloosian '60
Robert B. Peck '65
Eugene A. Piontek '64
Thomas D. Ricke '68
Kathleen A. Riley '68
Danielle A. Ruggiero '68
Linda (Gogoleski) Shadrack '62
Eleanor (Keller) Sheposh '62
Sharon (Mitan) Shook '64
Joan (Dugan) Smith '64
John W. Verdonk '69
Celeste (Solak) White '64, '93
Joan M. Wisely '61
James J. Yezbick '61

1970s

Mark G. Bielecki '71
Rev. James L. Bjorum '74
Nathan T. Bridges D.D.S. '75
James J. Bull '75
James A. Carlin '71
Herman L. Davis '78
Thomas W. Empric '72
James G. Frommeyer III '75
Kenneth M. Gonko '76, '79
Brother Leonard F. Haley, S.M. '73
Kenneth P. Kelly '75
Rev. Edward F. Kulik '71
Alger P. LaHood '73, '75
Christina Lipski '73
James F. Mahoney '78, '79

Mary (Winski) Michaluk '72
L. Guy Palmer '79
Edward J. Petersmarck '71
Karl W. Schettenhelm Jr. '76
Nicholas V. Silveri '70
R. Richard Steiner '72
Edward J. Zupancic '74, '75, '78

1980s

Paul M. Blank, D.D.S. '88
Bernard J. Buselmeier '80
Bobbie J. Greer '89
Bruce Harwood, D.D.S. '89
John Iaquina, D.D.S. '84
Gregory A. Jurczak, D.D.S. '80
James M. Karal '81
Dolores Miller '83
Anne Claire Van Ash '85
Michal P. Walker '89, '91

1990s

Charles E. Guns '94
David L. Stelmaszek '94

2000s

Jacob G. Wingate '08

Friends, Faculty and Staff

Maurice Chandler, former board member of Mercy College of Detroit and University of Detroit Mercy

Daniel A. Felicetti, former vice president and provost of University of Detroit Mercy

John McNary, former vice president for academic and student affairs at Mercy College of Detroit and chemistry professor at University of Detroit Mercy

John C. Thomson, former professor at Mercy College of Detroit



LOVE GROWS IN SMALL PLACES

The 36-by-15-foot Gardella Honors House is woven into the love story of Salar Brikho '20 and Melinda Dickow '19, '23.

The two met when they were in the Honors Program and "shared many tears, laughs, hours studying, deep conversations and sentimental moments there," Brikho said, explaining why he chose to propose to Dickow at the Gardella House this past summer. "Most importantly, the Gardella house is where we first said, 'I love you.'"

Originally the Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, the structure was a gift to the University from Rose and George A. Gardella Sr. It was dedicated in June 1963 and became the Gardella Honors House in 2006.

The building shows its use, but that didn't matter for Brikho and Dickow, as he cleaned and decorated it especially for the proposal. Thanks to a grant from the Titan Innovation Fund, renovations are under way to make the space inside and out more inviting for those in the Honors Program. The couple plans to marry in October 2025.

Read the full story here.



UPCOMING EVENTS



**SATURDAY
FEB. 1**

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Titan Winter Blast

Come to the McNichols Campus with your friends and family for the annual Chili Cook-Off competition, which includes carriage rides and good ol' Titan camaraderie! Stay after for the Titans men's basketball game.



**THURSDAY
MARCH 20**

Volunteer Appreciation

Celebrate another successful year with fellow alumni volunteers and the students you supported. Event details coming soon.



**SATURDAY
MARCH 22**

9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Becoming A Better U

Join us as we cultivate a culture of life-long learning. This event is for our alumni to expand their horizons within their professional careers and personal lives. Look for details soon.

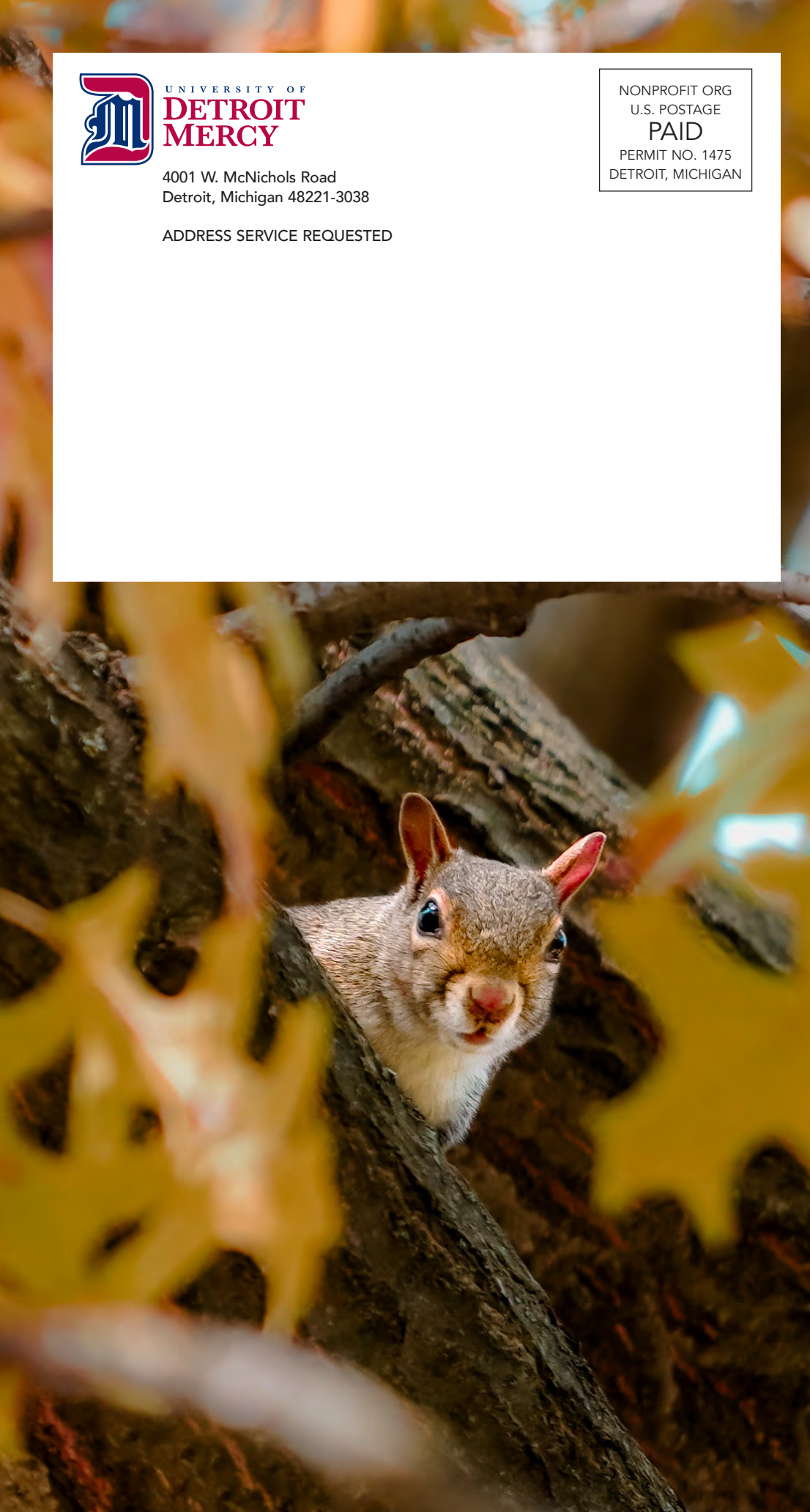


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SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

We at *Spiritus* would love to hear what you think of this magazine and University of Detroit Mercy.

Please share your thoughts with Ron Bernas, editor, at **bernasrj@udmercy.edu** or **Spiritus**, Second Floor, Student Union, 4001 W. McNichols Road, Detroit, MI, 48221-3038.